

1857

Complete

Arranged

An Essay  
on

Dysentery

Respectfully submitted to the  
Faculty

of the

Homoeopathic Medical College

of

Pennsylvania

On the first day of February

One thousand Eight hundred and Fifty7

By

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## Dysentery

Dysentery is generally understood to be a diseased condition of the large intestine, indicated by frequent evacuations from the bowels accompanied with colic pain tenesmus and general febrile affections. But when we consider the range of inflammation caused by dysentery we cannot see how with propriety this disease can be strictly confined to the large intestines. In every circumstance indicates that the Epidemic like the exanthematous and typhoid process is a disease from the intoxication of the blood accompanied through the reception or development of a morbid poison of the blood and localizing itself upon the large intestines in the form of an irritant. Some writers have laboriously hard to prove that dysentery was not a peculiar disease of itself -



but is a Typhus, a Chlorosis, a Rheumatism, which forms its focus upon the colon and rectum and thus forms a colic Typhus, a colic Chlorosis &c. But we are of the opinion that dysentery should be considered the local expression of a morbid poison which may vary both in its origin and characteristics.

A large proportion of cases occur from some lurking poison and should be considered as having a malarious origin. And it thus appears in connection with Typhus and is observed to be more common in marshy regions in Summer and Autumn.

### Indolical Character

As we have stated before the principle seat of Dysentery is the large intestines, but the seat in regard to its point of concentration and termination is the mucous

membrane of the largest intestines.  
 And the principle changes are found from  
 the caecum to the rectum, but the affection  
 is not confined to this portion of the intestine  
 or its mucous membrane. The pathological  
 changes often pass beyond the caecum to the  
 small intestine & stomach. Liber ancespian.  
 The disease sometimes affects the sub-  
 mucous tissue, muscular coat and even  
 reaches the peritoneal coat. After the  
 inflammation attacks the mucous mem-  
 brane, the epithelium is elevated in  
 small vesicles and is cast off in small  
 patches, so that the membrane lying  
 underneath looks scoriated.

Dr Cheyne observes that the small intes-  
 tines are affected and also the mucous  
 membrane of the stomach in proportion



As the large intestines were diseased.  
 Ulceration generally shows itself in the  
 colon and in the part nearest the cecum  
 but in this part it is superficial. as the  
 bowel was traced down towards the colon  
 the ulceration became deeper and more  
 extensive. sometimes there are four or  
 five inches of rectum perfectly sound to all  
 appearance. In cases where death has occurred  
 in the early stage of the disease from  
 violent febrile action or some other cause  
 the stomach and small intestines have  
 been found very much inflamed. of a  
 deep red or purple color. soft and pulpy  
 with uneven surface and sometimes gran-  
 ulated. In some cases the liver is very much  
 affected and dissection has shown that it  
 is sometimes ulcerated.

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Sometimes there is thickening of the intestinal wall - caused by a serous infiltration into the sub mucous cellular tissue. And penetrating by degrees into the muscular.

Cause which is at Dysentery  
It is well understood that dysentery is far more frequent in the summer and fall months than at any other seasons of the year. The animal frame at this season of the year is much debilitated from having been exposed for a long time to the stimulus of a high atmospheric temperature and in many cases that of the direct rays of the sun. The digestive organs and intestinal canal necessarily partaking more or less of this debility are easily irritated and thrown out of order than-



at any other season of the year.

The causes that produce Dysentery may be of two kinds. Direct and Sympathetic.

The direct are chiefly those of diet, and may consist of any sudden application of cold to the stomach below its actual temperature such as drinking cold water and eating ice cream when the system is in a very heated condition, eating flatulent herbs or acid fruits when the stomach is too weak to digest them.

Drinking impure water, especially such as consists of decomposed animal or vegetable substances. In this last case the disease is often Endemic, of which we have a striking example, while the Soldiers are stationed in the barracks at Cork, while the disease was raging with

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it was observed that the troops were aff-  
licted with water contaminated by an influx  
from the public rivers and rendered  
brackish by an intermixture with the tide.  
Their beverage was immediately changed  
and the disease suddenly disappeared.

The Sympathetic causes are those which  
operate upon the intestines through the  
medium of other organs. chiefly those  
of the skin and lungs, as exposure to cold  
drafts of air when the body is heated, wet-  
clothes and wet feet, producing like the  
last a sudden transition from heat to  
cold causing the blood to return to the  
internal organs, and being there in  
larger quantities than usual, set up  
irritation and inflammation as a result.



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And as the intestines are often in a weakened condition excited by the impurities in water. so they are by the impurities or animalcules that are floating so commonly in the air. in miasmatic regions and hence this disease assumes an Epidemic or in the former an Endemic form.

### Dysentery

This disease may occur with or without any forewarning symptoms. in the former case there is general uneasiness in the abdomen especially in the lower portion of the colon with a bearing down sensation, general weakness and loss of appetite. These symptoms may be accompanied with diarrhoea or constipation. Sometimes the local symptoms

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make their appearance before the general  
ones and in some mild cases it may  
run its extent without more or any  
fever. Sometimes the local and general  
symptoms make their appearance at  
the same moment. The patient expe-  
riencing a chill at the same time he  
has pain and tenderness. When the fever  
precedes for sometime the disordered state  
of the intestines the diarrhoea is one  
dependant upon some other cause. In dif-  
ferent cases of diarrhoea or rather dysentery  
we have a regular gradation of severity  
from a very slight effect of a small part  
of the rectum and colon with slight fever  
passing off in a few days up to an exten-  
sive severity of the disease through the  
whole intestines and even attacking



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The liver and spleen until it becomes  
one of the most fatal diseases that  
the human flesh is heir to. But the  
extent of the disease is measured by the  
susceptibility of the patient and the  
degree that it is simple or complicated.  
Generally more mucous inflammation  
~~is a mild~~ of the intestines is a mild  
affection. But it is often associated  
with some other diseased organs or  
morbid condition of the system generally  
which has a tendency to complicate the  
disease and render it more fatal.

### Simple Dysentery

In the commencement of this disease we  
have generally griping pain in the abdomen  
which are not regular in their appearance  
or position and followed by a discharge

from the bowels which gives the patient  
relief. In a short period after the evacuation  
there is a sense of weight in the abdomen  
with a desire to go to stool accompanied  
with a sense of heat and burning, but  
when they go to stool are unable to discharge  
any thing but mucus and sometimes  
mucus streaked with blood. This severe  
pain that is experienced by the patient is caused  
by the fecal matter passing over that  
of the rectum which has been made very  
sensible by irritation and inflammation.  
As the disease advances tenesmus  
is the most prominent symptom. The  
calls for stool are more frequent and  
tenesmus so severe that the straining  
sometimes produces prolapsus ani-  
especially in children.



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The discharges are seldom less than ten or  
twelve in twenty four hours, in a very mild  
form of the disease. But sometimes in more  
cases they amount to from one to three hundred  
etc. - After a few evacuations which are  
more superficial, the discharge consists  
of a whitish mucus which is sometimes  
streaked with blood. And sometimes the  
discharges consist of almost pure blood  
caused by the erosion of some blood vessel  
with those as the disease advances are little  
shreds of membrane and sometimes the  
membrane is seen in little patches.  
In some cases there is ~~more or less~~ headache  
are more or less hardened lumps of feces  
called Scybala, formed by the spasmodic  
contraction which is often runs through  
the intestines. fetid evacuations are

are generally followed with some relief.  
 At first the evacuations have a little mucus  
 but after a little while they acquire an  
 odor which seems to be peculiar to dysen-  
 tery. In all cases of dysentery there is more  
 or less fever, pulse quick and full. Skin hot  
 and dry. insufficient quantity of urine  
 tongue moist and coated with a whitish  
 mucus a fur. Sometimes the impressions  
 made upon the nervous system (in cases of recent,  
 is so great that it is with great difficulty  
 that the vital forces are able to react.  
 In more cases there is a sensation of  
 hollowiness in the abdomen. attended  
 with cold clammy skin, feeble throbbing  
 pulse, and sometimes mucus and hemi-  
 ting. This stage of the disease generally  
 passes off, and the disease terminates



favorably for the patient in eight or ten days.  
There are some cases that the inflammation  
is to such an extent and the shock  
to the nervous system so great that  
it will not react. In this case the patient  
has from the beginning a very feeble pulse  
and also frequent. A cold clammy skin.

The features express great anxiety. count-  
enance sunken. Purple hue around the  
eyes, at the roots of the finger nails, and  
upon the lips. In this stage of the disease  
the evacuations are very frequent - and  
accompanied with great tenesmus. The  
abdomen is tumid and very tense  
and very susceptible to pressure.  
Such cases generally prove fatal in a few  
days after they have arrived to this stage.  
Should ordinary cases not improve in

ten or twelve days there is danger  
of the disease assuming a more  
dangerous form. all the symptoms  
becoming changed or aggravated. The  
tongue assume a ~~dry~~ <sup>dry</sup> appearance  
strips off its fur and is red smooth  
and sometimes gashed. When dysentery  
terminates favorably the pains generally  
diminish in their severity and the  
interval between their recurrence is  
longer than usual. The stools are more  
profuse but less frequent and possess  
more of a fecal character. and finally  
nothing remains except a slight dis-  
charge which passes off in a few days.

#### Catarrhal form

This form of dysentery has usually a short  
precuratory stage. The fever generally slight.



and not infrequently entirely passing  
after the disease has become local.  
This form of the disease is not contagious  
the functions of the skin and kidneys  
are not much interfered with.

The pain in the abdomen is of a colicky  
nature. The abdomen is warm soft  
and not very sensitive to pressure.  
The evacuations are partially colored  
with bile. feculent streaks or mixed with  
blood. There is slight tenderness this  
form of the disease continues generally from  
eight to twelve days and terminates  
in health.

### Inflammatory Stage

This stage is known from the commence-  
ment by a severe chill which sometimes  
continues for many hours. and then is

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followed by severe heat. The dysentery  
commences with great fury. Soon there  
are developed signs of abdominal infl-  
ammation. The pain in the bowels  
is continuous and increasing in sever-  
ity. The abdomen is very sensitive to  
pressure. Tenesmus very severe. Sometimes  
in the commencement of this disease there  
is a large quantity of blood discharged  
which relieves the patient. Sometimes the  
stool contains membranous masses.  
At this stage of the disease there is frequently  
cramp in the bladder and calf of the legs.  
Inflammation in this case may not  
be confined to the large intestines, but  
frequently extends to the liver and spleen.  
The pulse is full frequent but sometimes  
suppressed. Tongue red and rough.



Sometimes covered with a white coat -  
 In this stage of the disease the thirst is  
 very great. face red eyes more or less  
 injected. urine has a redish cast -  
 skin hot and dry - The length of the  
 disease is from four to ten to twenty one  
 days - In unfavorable cases the stools  
 have a cadaverous smell. and pass off  
 involuntarily. Delirium sinking pulse  
 tongue becomes dry - Inflammatory  
 dysentery may terminate in gangrene  
 or ulceration amounting to perforation.

### Adynamic Form

In this form of the disease the whole sys-  
 tem is deeply affected. there is headache  
 vertigo and great prostration, often before the  
 invasion of the peculiar dysenteric symptoms  
 there is a violent chill. a sensation as though

cold water was being poured over the back  
 and generally the diarrhoea is preceded by  
 these symptoms. The acute stage is distin-  
 guished by the great number of stools.  
 The discharges are of a brownish and sometimes  
 of a blackish color they possess a very bad  
 odor which is similar to a cadaverous  
 smell - These evacuations are so acrid  
 that they excoriate the parts about the  
 anus. The fever that accompanies this is  
 of a torpid character. The pulse is small  
 skin hot and dry at times but most  
 generally cold especially the extremities  
 The features have a sunken appearance.  
 The tongue dry cold colored dark brown,  
 sometimes there is a rust upon the skin  
 towards the close of the disease. There is violent  
 hicough and vomiting of a dark substance.



involuntary discharges and often bleeding  
from the bowels. This form of the disease proo-  
ves fatal in from ten to fourteen days.

### Bilious Cholera

In dysentery of this kind a bilious con-  
dition of the system generally precedes the  
dysentery. There is frequently discharged by  
vomiting and by stool bilious matter  
yellow grass green or dark green fluid  
which relieves the patient. This form of dysen-  
tery is often complicated with inflammation  
of the liver which sometimes terminates in  
abscess. The crisis of this disease often occurs  
with a discharge of fecal matter and a  
puslulous eruption upon the face, around  
the mouth and nose.

## Treatment

It is essential that the patient should be placed in a room that can be well ventilated so that the patient may have a sufficient amount of fresh air - great care should be taken to prevent as far as possible the accumulation of any effluvia or miasm. This is of common importance for the welfare of the patient - as for the safety of the nurse attendant great care should be taken about the cleanliness of the bed. The discharges should not be allowed to remain in the room but removed immediately. A bed pan should be used for the evacuations, and not allow the patient to get up, as he will be exposed to cold air and also weakened by getting up every few moments. The extremities should be kept warm - Every thing should



be withheld from the stomach that is of an  
irritating character. Cold water should not  
be allowed as it at once excites tenderness.

but its place may be supplied with water  
that has been boiled and cooled again - or  
mucilaginous drinks such as rice water.  
Barley water, oatmeal gruel &c. Milk, provided  
it is well coagulated with acid flour is very good.  
The white of an egg beat up in water is also  
very good -

In the appearance of this Epidemic disease  
it is the duty of every Physician to study  
thoroughly its epidemic characters and then  
with careful judgment select such remedies  
as shall be competent to combat the disease  
in all its forms.

## Medicines

*Acute*— Should be given in the first commencement of the disease, and when there is high inflammatory fever, quick pulse and full pulse. Hot dry skin ecchymosis and tormina, frequent small stools and tenesmus.

*Alves*— By repeated trials this remedy has proved itself to be one of considerable importance in some cases of dysentery, when the abdomen is distended and very sensitive to touch violent pressing and burning pains along the course of the rectum or colon—stools bloody evacuations mixed with blood and attended with violent tenesmus. Heat and smartness when at stool, excoriation about the anus tongue dry and red



*Chamanilla* - This remedy is useful when the disease thus arrives from exposure to cold atmosphere when in a state of perspiration. When we find foul tongue with bitter taste in the mouth and bilious stools before tenesmus makes its appearance. This remedy is best in the first stages of dysentery.

*Capricum* - - - - -

This remedy is valuable when we have frequent small bloody or mucous stools with tenesmus. Discharge followed by great thirst and if drink is allowed this is a chill - severe colic pain in the umbilical region. Thirst and fever from evening to midnight -

*Carbo-Vegatubalis* - This is also indicated in the malignant form of dysentery -

when arsenicum fails to relieve the patient. symptoms very much like those for arsenicum. The patient has cold breath and cold surface. if the pulsat odor does not disappear after using Carbo. Veg. - China should be tried.

Mercurious Corrosives - is the chief remedy in most forms of dysentery. It is most indicated in fall dysentery when the days are hot and nights cold. and when there are small and frequent bloody stools continuing all the time night and day with but little cessation. Constant-cutting pain in the bowels



with great urging and tenesmus. The  
colic pain extends to the back with  
chills. Heat. Thirst - a great anxiety

Nux Vomica - is very useful in many  
forms of dysentery. The indications are  
frequent small and bloody mucus dis-  
charges with urging and tenesmus  
violent cutting pain in the umbilical  
region. internal heat - great thirst  
bitter or putrid taste in the mouth.

Armenicum - is one of the most important  
remedies when the disease is Epidemic  
and in other forms of the disease. It is  
called for when we have great weakness

and frustration from the commencement  
 stools black, bloody, acrid, putrid and  
 often involuntary. violent burning  
 pain in the abdomen. rapid sinking  
 of the vital energies. pulse small and in-  
 termittent. coldness of the extremities  
 cadaverous smelling discharges from  
 of feet and urine. dry cracked black tongue  
 hiccup and raging thirst with full  
 sunken countenance.

Belladonna - is very valuable in these  
 inflammatory varieties when the patient  
 is of a sanguine temperament full habit  
 lively ardent disposition. tendency of blood



to the head. whitish tongue with  
the tip slightly red and inclined to be  
dry. spasmodic and colicky pains  
in the bowels constant - urging to  
stool and great tenesmus. strong  
bilious vomiting evening fever with  
intense thirst.

### Calacynth.

Calacynth - is very good for violent colicky  
pains in the umbilical region followed  
with bloody stools mixed with portions  
of membranes - attended with great tenes-  
mus. distention of the abdomen, pul-  
sus ~~at~~ the rectum.

Plumbum - when there is a violent form consisting of almost entire bloody discharges with continual cuttings in the bowels and stomach, fever, burning in the anus during the evacuations and continuation of tenesmus after stool.

Veratrum - is very appropriate in dysentery when we have watery discharges mixed with feces or dysentery accompanied with vomiting and coldness of the surface, great weakness, and cramp in the calves with cold sweat - discharges are more common in the night and followed by calic and chill - tenesmus is not present



Sulphur. is a very valuable remedy in  
 very bad cases where other remedies will  
 not, owing to chronic discuria, control  
 the disease.

There are many other remedies that are good  
 in this disease such as Pulsatilla.

Antimonium crudum - Bryonia - Sulfur -  
 Vitric acid. Celestium.

Sometimes for the comfort of the patient it is  
 necessary to give sitz baths also in  
 injections of starch or the white of an  
 egg beat up in water.